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MEMORANDUM FOR: NIOs 10 Jan 86

Further to yesterday's staff meeting discussions on the business of estimating, I attach a few items (from the AG Bible) which may be of interest -- especially so for newer NIC officers.

Hal Ford

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Date

FORM 5-75 101 USE PREVIOUS EDITIONS

cc: C/NIC
VC/NIC (GF)
PO/NIC
Ford Chrono

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

18 May 1984
Hal Ford (D/AG)

GUIDANCE FOR AG INITIATES CONCERNING THE ESTIMATES BUSINESS

There follow a number of maxims for your guidance. I'm sure I list too many.* Even so, you will find that heeding the following will lead you on to fame and fortune as an AG estimates officer.

1. Keep constantly in mind that estimates encounter very heavy competition for the time and attention of our senior policymaking consumers.

-- The very people at whom we're aiming are the ones who have the least time and energy to absorb our wisdom. They feel they do not need us. They carry their own NIEs around in their heads.

-- This applies in particular to soft subjects where evidence is thin and ambiguous -- and, within these categories, especially to those subjects which are best known generally. What did Al Haig think he needed to learn from us about NATO? Or, Richard Pipes about the nature of Soviet Communism? Or, Henry Kissinger about anything?

-- Dispassionate estimates have heavy going, too, because they are eternally up against advocacy in the marketplace. Policy advocacy is almost always much simpler, more appealing, more seductive, more flattering, and ofttimes deceiving.

* Wilson was satisfied with 14, Moses with ten, Lenin with three. This present batch has many more, and not listed in any particular order of priority.

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-- Polls of policymaking consumers indicate that estimates do not enjoy a particular welcome among them. With some notable exceptions, many estimates tend to be looked on as old hat, ho-hum, too general, too watered down, etc.

-- We must keep in mind that the formal NIEs, etc. are only one part of the intelligence being supplied to policymakers: not only basic and current data, but other estimative judgments being conveyed by NIOs and others, informally and face-to-face.

-- And, we must keep in mind that all of intelligence is only one input to policy, where it competes with numerous other, potent influences at work upon senior policymakers.

-- All this means that estimates have to be damn good -- in timeliness, relevance, unique contribution, quality, and usefulness -- to make any substantial impact. Decided progress has been made in the past few years in improving estimative performance, substantively and procedurally, but estimates still finish a poor third -- in the regard policymakers have for intelligence -- behind facts and current intelligence. We still have a long way to go.

2. This means that you have a big job in front of you: to fashion estimates of such utility that they will make constructive impact on the tough audience we face -- and so justify the time, talent, energy, and money spent on their preparation.

3. What can good national estimating offer?

-- Fierce independence of judgment, free from policy preference, preconceptions, or operational bias. This certainly is a prime contribution which estimates can and must make -- and which the consumers will not find elsewhere.

-- Thoroughness, perspective, wisdom, understanding, unique insights not obtainable in Washington's constant hurly-burly concentration on the immediate.

-- A sense of the major forces and trends at work in given situations.

-- A sense of which of those forces/trends are more-or-less inexorable, and which others may be amenable to US or other outside influence or remedy.

-- Long or intermediate-range warning of things that may go bump in the night. Not so much tactical warning, but alerts to the policymakers of what's brewing beyond the particular crises of the day with which he/she is always absorbed.

-- Often a good sense of the consequences of this or that world development, whether or not the near-term likelihood is high.

-- Estimates officers don't make policy, but we must not be shy in pointing up those handles that may exist for US policymakers in this and that situation in the world. Also, estimates can be so written that they evoke "aha!" ideas among the particularly perceptive of the policymaking readers.

4. Things particularly to avoid:

a. Writing about trees, rather than forests.

b. Assembling facts, rather than their so-what.

c. Contradiction, ambiguity, redundancy, and wish-wash.

d. Serving your preconceptions, rather than going where the evidence takes you.

e. Leaving the reader unclear -- from the very outset of your estimative piece -- about what the central messages are you are communicating, why they deserve his/her time, and what they can do for him/her. The key payoff in AG analysis and writing is an estimate's Key Judgments: Spend whatever time it takes to produce the essence of what your paper's message is -- in as crisp, clear, strong, and so-what manner as you can. Our principal consumers will at best generally read only the KJ's. And if we do a poor or cloudy job of composing them, those consumers' staffers will write up their own -- which may or may not convey the message and tone you intend.

f. Defending yesterday's judgments automatically and passionately.

g. Inattention to new evidence which may not be congenial to you because it modifies or negates your judgment or commitment of yesterday.

h. Writing about Ruritaina as if it were floating free in a void in which US policy and presence did not exist. Make every effort to know the US Blue side, and keep it in mind in forecasting Ruritania's future.

i. Sticking close to your desks and never going to sea. Get out and around -- into the intelligence, policymaking, and academic communities.

j. Reading every cable and in-box classified item, to the detriment of thorough attention to the best available unclassified materials: e.g., FBIS; speeches; major journal articles, foreign and

domestic; and the best of media and academic thought available, US and foreign. This guidance applies particularly to the softer subjects. The record: many of the best, most sophisticated estimates officers began careers in FBIS analysis -- where they were often ahead of the curve in discerning important changes in the world scene.

k. Estimative consensus. Our keynote is not consensus, but accuracy (as best we can discern it), and sharp exposition thereof. In coordination meetings avoid sic tyrannus non carborundum like the plague. We serve the consumers far better by stating our theses clearly, and letting the dissenters dissent rather than succeed in muddying up the message.

5. Keep in mind that intelligence and policymaking do not, in fact, interact in a rational, orderly manner.

-- "Policy" is often made sloppily, in a great hurry, or -- as Churchill is supposed to have said, "the making of foreign policy, like that of making sausage, is a process better not observed closely."

-- The impact of estimates varies greatly: sometimes central, sometimes not at all, sometimes at the margins.

-- Estimates are often most useful where particular policymakers can use them for particular personal or policy purposes, or where the estimates buttress their own policy predilictions or commitments.

-- Conversely, estimates will be ignored or criticized where their messages are not congenial to policymakers. This is an occupational hazard. Hang in there. Keep telling it like it is. And, ultimately, events will either prove you wrong or validate your insight, and in any event will in due time bring another Administration into office -- whose foreign policy preconceptions and hubris will be as pronounced, however different their character, from those with which you have been tilting.

6. You and the NIOs.

-- The NIOs and the D/AG first discuss estimates assignments, then D/AG and DD/AG will negotiate these with you -- seeking always to find the best substantive matchups.

-- NIOs have no authority on their own to sign you up on anything. If so approached, refer them to D/AG, and check with D/AG or DD/AG.

-- Once you have become an estimate's drafter, this means that you will be the principal producer of that project throughout the entire process. See procedure papers (in this Bible) for detailed guidance re all the steps, memos, routings, etc., necessary.

-- On interagency estimates the NIO is the officer responsible to the DCI for the content, message, format, and presentation of the piece. As such, he/she has the principal substantive call.

-- In most cases your own substantive judgment and those of the NIOs will be fairly similar. Stick to your guns if you feel an NIO is off. If there are differences between you of any magnitude, enlist D/AG's assistance.

-- At coordination meetings you are not only usually the keeper of the formal text, but are expected to weigh in persuasively in debate, to offer advice to the NIO (sotto voce) on language and on where to stick with the text, and to compose text on the spot (or during lunch breaks) -- new language that is, which will preserve the text's message and integrity.

-- You go to NFIB with the NIO, prepared to handle any last-moment detailia or hot grounders which may arise.

-- Your responsibilities as drafter do not end with NFIB. You will need to finish up with any maps or graphics you have earlier instituted (and, generally, the more the better), to negotiate distribution lists, to proof-read, and where applicable to prepare and negotiate appropriate versions of the estimate for release to liaison. Check the guidance papers in this Bible [redacted] [redacted] 25X1

7. Writing estimates:

-- Check with DD/AG and D/AG before you submit your first draft of a terms of reference or an estimate to an NIO or anyone else outside the AG.

-- Once DD/AG and D/AG have OK'd your sending early drafts of estimates out for comment, be sure in every case to give copies to the NIO Chairman, any other appropriate NIOs (in the case of broad subject matter papers), D/AG, DD/AG, and appropriate specialists in the DDI. Later drafts will go to VC/NIC [redacted] 25X1

-- In the case of interagency estimates, pay first heed to the reactions you get from the paper's NIO chairman; and, secondly, from D/AG and others.

-- Please inform DD/AG, early on, if you encounter or expect any serious differences of judgment on the part of DDI or other specialists.

-- In cases of any in-house (not interagency) studies you may prepare, proceed and distribute as above, but here pay first heed to the reactions of D/AG and DD/AG, to NIOs and others secondarily.

-- In addition to your given assignments, always keep brooding independently about world developments, and do not hesitate to recommend to DD/AG and D/AG that this or that estimative study be initiated, or this or that procedure improved.

-- Good luck

Hal Ford
D/AG

excellent article.
107.

The Intelligence-Policymaker Tangle

Yehoshafat Harkabi

The publication of the Kahan Commission report, with its indictment of the IDF Intelligence Chief, reopened the debate on the relationship between the Intelligence services and their clientele, the policymakers. The formal description of how Intelligence supplies the policymakers with information and evaluations as a basis for molding policy is simplistic and incomplete. The relations between these echelons are complex and tension-ridden, as is evident when one looks beyond formal hierarchical structures and processes at the influence of informal relations on the workings of administrative bodies.

The study of the functioning of Intelligence services, which has greatly developed in recent years, does not focus only on how the Intelligence service produces its reports – information gathering and analysis. It also deals with the crucial area where the usefulness of the service is put to trial; namely, the transmittal of the Intelligence service's product to the policymaking bodies, the 'interface' between Intelligence and policy.

Intelligence is not an autonomous operation whose *raison d'être* lies in itself. Intelligence activities depend on having a clientele to serve. However, its clients are not necessarily receptive to Intelligence, for what they often look for is not so much data on the basis of which to shape policy but rather support for pre-formed political and ideological conceptions. The Intelligence service finds

* Y. Harkabi is Hexter Professor of International Relations and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He served as Chief of Israeli Military Intelligence (1955–1959) and as Adviser for Intelligence to Israel's Prime Minister (1977). This article was originally published (in Hebrew) in the *Bulletin* of the Hebrew University Faculty of Social Sciences.

[*The Jerusalem Quarterly*, Number 30, Winter 1984]

itself in difficult straits, for it is aware that many of its efforts will not be utilized or appreciated, and the use made of its assessments and reports will differ from its expectations. Matters get worse the more ideologically motivated is the regime, for then policy is made more on the basis of ideological inputs than on the basis of Intelligence reportings on reality, which to the extent that they contradict the ideology may be discarded, and the Intelligence service ends up frustrated.

Policy can be judged according to the extent of its 'sensitivity' to Intelligence – will it change if a certain evaluation requires such a change? As a concrete example, what Intelligence reporting could induce a change in Israel's present policy on Judea and Samaria? Does the rigidity of a political position make it impervious to Intelligence? An ideological regime may revel in exotic covert Intelligence operations, encourage them, and still keep Intelligence evaluations at arm's length. Nor is there simple transitivity between the quality of the Intelligence and the quality of policy. Good Intelligence is no guarantee of good policy and vice versa. Even if Intelligence portrayed reality correctly and its evaluations were accepted, policy also includes other components, such as goals, objectives, and assumptions about causal relations between policy and outcomes, which are not necessarily Intelligence products.

Policymakers too have their legitimate complaints against Intelligence, claiming that it supplies them with a motley catchall collection of information, containing everything but what is needed at the time; or that it expresses itself in equivocal and reserved language that leaves them perplexed; or still worse, that its evaluations are not reliable and excessively opinionated.

The Intelligence service should enter the policymaking process twice: first, by providing data and assessments of the situation, which will contribute to the shaping of policy; and secondly, after the policy has been formulated, Intelligence should also evaluate the likely reactions of adversaries and third parties to that policy and its success or failure. However, it often happens that statesmen refrain from seeking the Intelligence service's opinion on this, for basic reasons. For by making such a request of the Intelligence they elevate it to the position of judging their policy. Thus a tangle is created whereby the Intelligence arm which is a subordinate body, becomes an arbiter, a kind of supervisor over its masters. What is more, the statesmen may harbor suspicions that the Intelligence services may cite the difficulties and weaknesses of their policy. Not fortuitously has the Intelligence service been dubbed 'negativistic', a discouraging factor, for it may tend more to point to drawbacks than call attention to opportunities. Hence, Kissinger stigmatized the Intelligence service for pushing towards 'immobilism'.

The Intelligence service itself will not volunteer for the role of

policy-monitoring, fearing that it may mar its relations with its superiors, the policymakers, and may cause it to collide with conceptions sacred to them, or with their dreams. For example, once the idea of getting the Phalanges into action in Beirut became a desire, almost an obsession, among the Israeli policy-makers, a presentation of the hazards of such a policy placed the Intelligence in an uncomfortable position. Similarly, it may be supposed that an organization like the KGB would be inhibited from presenting evaluations that clash with Marxism and with Soviet policy. The Intelligence service, therefore, will not volunteer to serve as a traffic signal light flashing red and green alternately to the advancing policy carriage.

There is an exaggerated tendency to present the Intelligence service as if it were an institution for the sounding of tocsins. The Intelligence service is primarily an institution for the provision of information which is meant to lead to knowledge and understanding, and is not merely a warning mechanism. The principal line of defense against surprises is 'understanding', not 'warning'. Warning is in order in times of emergency and before the onset of calamity - but those are few and far between. And if indeed the Intelligence service is expected to warn about impending dangers stemming from an action initiated by the *enemy*, it is hard to expect that it also be an institution that warns against the injurious outcomes of our own policy, or our home-made surprises. That is an important difference, which it seems, the Kahan Commission was not alive to. Certainly the Intelligence service would do well were it itself, on its own, to point out the probable consequences of policy, but it is advisable that the chiefs-of-state understand the Intelligence's reluctance to become overseers, august or meek, on their policy and address it with explicit queries, as an invitation for the Intelligence's intervention. People are not aware of how complicated and difficult is the Intelligence service's work of collecting, analyzing and evaluating information. The Intelligence service will not willingly seek out additional troubles for itself. It is not sheer squeamishness.

In short, the Intelligence service is an institution more for the giving of answers than for sounding warnings, especially about our policy. It is the task of the leaders to put questions to it, and if they do not ask, let it not be said that they assumed that the service would inform them of its own accord. True, since the Intelligence service provides reports on an ongoing routine basis, the impression might be formed that it offers its opinions on every relevant issue automatically. That is an error, and it would have been helpful to Israeli policymaking had the Kahan Commission been alert to it and drawn attention to these aspects.

It may be argued that the Intelligence service does not fully discharge its duty by providing the policymakers with information and assessments, and that precisely because its product may be

critical for policy, the service must see to it that its reports are properly understood. However, the Intelligence service will refrain from testing whether the policymakers have properly understood the material that has been passed on to it, that it will shrink from taking the role of a pedantic teacher correcting misunderstandings on the part of the policymakers. Indeed, a pretension on the part of the Intelligence service to be the policymakers' 'mentor' is liable to be counterproductive.

It may come to pass that senior Intelligence functionaries may differ with the policymakers' policy. Their critical stance *vis-à-vis* the adopted policy may be based on an evaluation of the historical trend, yet they may not be able to adduce factual proof for their position. In most instances, the error of the policy line emerges in a clearly decisive way only in the long range, for the feedback circuit in such matters is slow. In the short range a mistaken policy line does not necessarily entail outcomes that refute it. It may then appear to the policymakers that their course is succeeding, and that the facts abet it. Hence, the Intelligence service cannot use such facts to validate its criticism of policy, for in a confrontation with the policymakers it can avail itself only of facts whose message is clear and evident; and thus its assessments of long-range trends may not, in such cases, be serviceable for it. The Intelligence criticism of policy may then appear as arbitrary and irksome, even as stemming from lack of sympathy towards the policymakers themselves. Thus, here too, the Intelligence service may choose to withhold counsel. Later, when the error of the policy becomes clear, there will be those who will protest that the Intelligence service should have warned in time about the mistaken policy, and an inquiry commission may even find the service culpable.

The Intelligence service is aware that it treads on precarious ground and is liable to be singled out for blame in any error, since in every political or military decision there is an assumption on the situation or a component of knowledge, the lack of which can be imputed to Intelligence. For instance, a commander can decide to outflank and attack from the left, not because the Intelligence service advised him to do so. Were decisions based only on Intelligence data, decisions and policy would simply 'follow' from it and there would be no need for policymakers. If his attack fails, the commander can shift the blame to Intelligence by contending that it did not warn him that the left flank was strong and could not be crushed. Any military action can fail, either because our troops were not good or because the enemy's troops were. There is no institutionalized body whose job is to evaluate our troops, and thus it is easy to transfer the blame for a military failure to Intelligence, which, as it were, slighted the enemy's ability. The Intelligence service has been frequently described as the staff's 'whipping boy'. Thus, the Intelligence service is usually a frightened institution.

In many fields a human error of evaluation or judgement is

considered as extenuating circumstances; however, it is the fate of Intelligence that its error of evaluation is always enshrined in its bill of indictment. Whereas the popular saying has it that 'to err is human', an almost superhuman perfection is expected of Intelligence. We are living among our own people with no problems of accession to knowledge and still are stunned by domestic political developments. But if Intelligence does not successfully forecast a political denouement in a foreign country, brows are wrinkled: how is that possible? What inefficiency!

After the Intelligence service has failed in reporting on some information or evaluation, it is likely to take out insurance for itself by way of enlarging the quantity of its reports and including everything in them, so that it may not be found wanting in reporting. It will then flood the policymakers with Intelligence reports. However, over-reporting may be detrimental for the Intelligence service influence as important items may be lost in the multitude of the less important and trivial ones. True, what will eventually prove important does not always immediately catch the eye. The statesmen may be able to defend themselves against overabundance of Intelligence reporting, by employing an aide to sift and summarize the material for them. Such an aide fills the role of 'Intelligence waiter' who marks for his superior what is worth his attention. What is significant in the eyes of the 'Intelligence waiter' and the Intelligence service is not necessarily identical. Despite the vital role such an assistant fulfils for his master, such an intermediary arrangement may also complicate things, for the Intelligence service does not know what information has reached the policymakers, of what they are aware and of what not. Furthermore, statesmen may tend to look or rather browse over Intelligence material, often at the end of an exhausting day when they are fatigued or half drowsy.

Presumably, it is good that the chief of the Intelligence service be on close terms with the policymakers and have their trust. However, such bosom companionship too has its drawbacks. True, the more he is a part of the inner Byzantine court that develops as a matter of course around state chiefs, the greater is his influence; however, he then also loses perspective and his independent critical vision, and gradually succumbs to the conceptions of the policymakers. He is then unable to detach himself from festivities of policymaking just like the other self-gratified members of the court who bask in their connections with power. Thomas Hughes urged that Intelligence should give the policymakers 'utmost support with utmost reservation'. That surely is no simple combination.

In its reports the Intelligence service must differentiate between statements of fact and evaluations concerning the future, which are always a matter of conjecture. It is an error to present an evaluation of future trends as if they were facts. The desire of the

Intelligence people to present a clearcut unqualified opinion is commendable, but it may mislead them to present their hypotheses about the future developments as if they were foregone conclusions and final judgements not to be disputed. In reporting evaluations one should not transcend the amount of certitude the data warrants, and even the probable should not be offered as the absolutely certain. The Intelligence service should not be inhibited from making the policymakers privy to the uncertainties of evaluation, especially regarding future important developments, tendencies and intentions. The more the service does that, the more the policymakers will understand the quandaries and limitations of the Intelligence services and will not nurture expectations that cannot be met and which in the end may be counterproductive for both policy and Intelligence.

The Intelligence service is judged according to the final quality or significance of its output – its reports. The words of our Sages in *Pirkei Avot*, 'according to the pains so is the reward', do not apply to Intelligence. The toils involved in obtaining the information on which the reports are based have low visibility, and the Intelligence service is prevented from talking about them or from recounting its woes. But without information collection, there is no Intelligence evaluation. In fact, in Intelligence most of the efforts in manpower and resources go to information collection. If those efforts, and the efforts to extract evaluations from the information are not appreciated, feelings of bitterness will develop in the service, as if the policymakers, and even the country as a whole, are ungrateful. These feelings swell when the Intelligence people compare the sophistication and advanced methods employed in collection of the information and the production of Intelligence against the cavalier fashion or improvisation with which policy decisions are many a time reached.

The Intelligence service is represented to the policymakers by its director. He participates (if invited) in meetings or caucuses at which important decisions are made. However, as an individual he cannot provide an exhaustive representation of, or reflect the knowledge and wisdom that has accumulated in his institution. However broadminded and gifted he may be, it is one of the tragic ironies of Intelligence that its chief may constitute a 'bottleneck' who detracts from the quality of his service, thus unwittingly deflating its value and its impact. The consumer of Intelligence must understand that and therefore pay heed to the institutional reports and not only to what comes directly from its chief's mouth.

Intelligence services in our world cost a great deal of money. The Israeli public has no idea how costly this service is. However, to the extent that the policymakers are not aware of how the Intelligence can be useful, and what its limitations are, and do not direct it and ask it questions expressly, the utility of Intelligence is partial and resources are wasted. The great outlays for Intelligence are

justifiable only if the policy based on its information is of high quality. An unrealistic policy, whether autarkic or autistic, has no need for Intelligence and the Intelligence service cannot help it. Intelligence efforts are worthwhile only where they contribute to the shaping of a wise policy.

From arm's length to love-hate

THE INTELLIGENCE—POLICY RELATIONSHIP*

Hans Heymann, Jr.

> If we in intelligence were one day given three wishes, they would be to know everything, to be believed when we spoke, and in such a way to exercise an influence to the good in the matter of policy. But absent the Good Fairy, we sometimes get the order of our unarticulated wishes mixed. Often we feel the desire to influence policy and perhaps just stop wishing there. This is too bad, because to wish simply for influence can, and upon occasion does, get intelligence to the place where it can have no influence whatever. By striving too hard in this direction, intelligence may come to seem just another policy voice, and an unwanted one at that.
>
> Sherman Kent **

In the catechism of the intelligence officer, the thesis that intelligence is and should be strictly separate from policy is taken as axiomatic. It is as hallowed in the theology of intelligence as the doctrine of the separation of church and state is in the US Constitution. For much of our early history we tended to view intelligence somewhat self-righteously as objective, disinterested, and dispassionate, and to regard policy somewhat disdainfully as slanted, adulterated, and politicized. And we strove mightily to maintain the much-touted arm's length relationship with policy, believing that proximity to policy would corrupt the independence of our intelligence judgments. Indeed, legend has it that members of the Board of National Estimates of the 1950s and 1960s systematically discouraged analysts and estimators from going downtown to have lunch with policymakers, for fear that such exposure would make them policy advocates and tempt them to serve power rather than truth.

Whatever the validity of this legend, such strictures were quite in keeping with the traditional view of a proper intelligence-policy relationship. By enforcing this kind of rigorous separation, the old Board no doubt hoped to protect the policy neutrality of intelligence; what it did, of course, was to impose a splendid isolation upon intelligence that assured its eventual policy irrelevance. The vanishing applause for its product coming from the policy side caused intelligence to reexamine its assumptions, and a new, unconventional wisdom came to be heard. Its message was that our faith in the arm's length relationship was misplaced, that no such relationship really ever existed, and that close ties between intelligence and policy are not only inevitable, but essential if the policymaker's needs are to be served.

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* Adapted from a presentation at the "Conference on Intelligence: Policy and Process" at the United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, June 1984.

** "Estimates and Influence," originally presented in London, September 1966, subsequently published in *Foreign Service Journal*, XLVI, (April 1969).

Studies in Intelligence
Fall 1984, vol 28, no 4

A new way of thinking about intelligence and policy began to emerge, seeing the two communities as awkwardly entangled and intertwined in what might be described as a competitive and often conflicting symbiotic relationship. Thomas Hughes put it most aptly, when he spoke of the relationship "as a two-way search: of intelligence in search of some policy to influence and of policy in search of some intelligence for support." * Suddenly, *out* is the comforting illusion that intelligence stands outside of and above the policy fray; that it can load its analytic and estimative ammunition on its wagon and let the wagon roll down in the general direction of the battle without worrying where it will come to rest, whether the ammunition is of the right caliber and how it will be used—to say nothing of whether someone might shoot it back. And *in* is the less comfortable notion that intelligence, if it is to be at all relevant to policy, is very much a participant in the battle; that it must be attuned to the strategy and tactics being pursued; and that it is by no means invulnerable to being seesawed and whiplashed in the sociopolitical tug of war known as the policymaking process.

How this process unfolds in the real world and the intricate ways in which intelligence interacts with it have, within the past decade, been the subject of some first-rate analytic writing. Three contributions to this intelligence-foreign policy literature are particularly worthy of note:

1. One is the observation, vividly illustrated by Thomas Hughes,** that the intelligence community is no more a unitary actor than the policy community; that it should be seen, rather, as a hydra-headed agglomoration of competing institutions often at odds with each other, and not necessarily in predictable patterns. Observing the budgetary, organizational, and substantive struggles within this community, Hughes notes that

> the cross-cutting complexities were striking: position disputes within agencies, alliances shifting with issues, personal strayings from organizational loyalties, hierarchical differences between superiors and subordinates, horizontal rather than vertical affinities, and much *ad hoc* reaching for sustenance somewhere outside. Thus, while the struggles within the intelligence community sometimes mirrored simultaneous struggles in the larger policy community, they did so by no means invariably and never symmetrically.

It should not be astonishing, therefore, to find that policymakers perceive the intelligence process with as much ambivalence and suspicion as intelligence makers perceive the policy process and that the interactions among them tend to be contentious and rivalrous. To quote again from Hughes:

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* Tom Hughes deserves great credit for being the first, and surely most articulate iconoclast toppling the old conventional wisdom. His two Farewell Lectures as departing Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research of the Department of State in July 1969 contain the above quotation. The Lectures were subsequently reprinted in Thomas L. Hughes, *The Fate of Facts in a World of Men—Foreign Policy and Intelligence-Making* (New York: Foreign Policy Association, Headline Series No. 233, December 1976).

** Thomas L. Hughes, "The Power to Speak and the Power to Listen" in Thomas M Frank and others, eds., *Secrecy and Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press 1974), p. 15

> Viewed from above by the ranking policymakers, the intelligence community often seemed cumbersome, expensive, loquatious, probing, querulous, and at times axe-grinding. Viewed from below by the intelligence experts, the policy community often seemed determined to ignore evidence plainly before it—or (even worse) to mistake the intelligence managers for the experts. Viewed from in between at the intelligence-policy interface, it looked like controlled chaos—and not surprisingly, for here was where means and ends were brokered, jurisdictional rivalries compromised, contentious controversies delineated.*

2. Another is the thesis, persuasively argued by Richard Betts,** that intelligence failures, so-called, are more often than not policy failures; or to put it more gently, that it is usually impossible to disentangle intelligence failures from policy failures, since (intelligence) analysis and (policy) decisions are interactive rather than sequential processes. Betts sees the intelligence role as seeking "to extract certainty from uncertainty and to facilitate coherent decision in an incoherent environment." In seeking to reduce uncertainty, intelligence is often forced to extrapolate from evidence that is riddled with ambiguities. Inability to resolve these ambiguities leads to intelligence products that oversimplify reality and fail to alert the policy consumers of these products to the dangers that lurk within the ambiguities. Critical mistakes are consequently made by policymakers who, faced with ambiguities, will substitute wishful thinking and their own premises and preconceptions for the assessments of professional analysts. As Betts puts it:

> Because it is the job of decision-makers to decide, they cannot react to ambiguity by deferring judgment. . . . When a welter of fragmentary evidence offers support to various interpretations, ambiguity is exploited by wishfulness. The greater the ambiguity, the greater the impact of preconceptions.***

3. A third example is the recent revelation by a former Chief of Israeli Military Intelligence and Advisor to the Israeli Prime Minister, Yehoshafat Harkabi,**** that the tensioned and ambivalent relationship between intelligence and policy is not a uniquely American phenomenon.

These dilemmas and foibles of the intelligence-policy interface are hardly novel or startling to seasoned intelligence practitioners, especially those senior officers charged with "brokering" the intelligence-policy relationship—the communicators and interactors who reside in the twilight zone between intelligence and policy. For them, this is familiar terrain. As managers and stimulators of intelligence production, they know with what difficulty a crisp, lucid analytic product is extracted from a dissentious community; as participants in

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* Idem, p.19

** Richard K. Betts, "Analysis, War and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable," *World Politics*, XXXI (October 1978)

*** Idem, p. 70

**** Yehoshafat Harkabi, "The Intelligence-Policymaker Tangle," in *The Jerusalem Quarterly*, Number 30, Winter 1984. (The article was reprinted in the Summer 1984 issue of *Studies in Intelligence*, Volume 28, Number 2.)

the interagency policy process, they observe with what ease that product can be selectively utilized, tendentiously summarized, or subtly denigrated. But for these privileged practitioners who move readily from the world of analysis to the world of action, familiarity with policy does not breed contempt. Rather, an appreciation of the murky and frenetic policy environment tends to evoke a certain sympathy for the policymakers' plight.

Such knowledgeable, involved practitioners, however, represent only a very small fraction of the intelligence population. The vast majority of that population—collectors, operators and analysts—is essentially isolated from the hurly-burly of the policy process. The intelligence services at large, therefore, are often mystified and frustrated by the policymakers' perennial unhappiness with their product. Given this puzzlement, it seems worthwhile to try to delve a little more deeply into the reasons for the unhappiness.

The View from the Bridge

It should be clear from what has been said that policy does not speak with a single voice. Policies have multiple authors. The numerous players who take part in policy formulation differ in temperament, education and experience, as well as in personal and institutional loyalties. Their attitudes toward intelligence, therefore, and their propensity to accept or reject its assessments will also vary widely. Nevertheless, although generalizations are always hazardous, we can discern some common attributes and concerns of policymakers, especially the "national security principals" *—the key players at the highest levels of government—that predispose them to react to intelligence offerings in predictable ways.

First, it is well to remember that the key decision makers are political leaders who have risen to their positions by being decisive, aggressive, and self-confident rather than reflective, introspective, and self-doubting. They attribute their success at least in part to their tried and proven ways of thinking, their simplified models and paradigms that explain to them what makes the world go 'round. They often regard themselves as their own best analysts and hence tend to be distrustful of the untested and often counterintuitive judgments of the intelligence professionals.

Second, they have a strong vested interest in the success of their policies and will, therefore, be disproportionately receptive to intelligence that "supports" these policies. They bear the burdens of great responsibility and find themselves perpetually embattled with a host of critics, competitors, and opponents, all eagerly looking for chinks in their armor. They thrive on optimists and boosters, but encounter mostly alarmists and carping critics.

Festooned in this way, and operating in so hostile an environment, these highest level consumers of intelligence can hardly be blamed for responding to its product with something less than boundless enthusiasm. In fact, it can be documented that every President since Eisenhower, and virtually every Secretary of State since Acheson, has expressed dissatisfaction and irritation with

* They include, at a minimum, the President, Vice President, National Security Adviser, Secretary of State, and Secretary of Defense.

intelligence analysis, either in his memoirs or in public or semipublic statements. The best-remembered and widely quoted expostulation was reported to have been delivered by Lyndon Johnson to his Director of Central Intelligence at a White House dinner:

> Policymaking is like milking a fat cow. You see the milk coming out, you press more and the milk bubbles and flows, and just as the bucket is full, the cow with its tail whips the bucket and all is spilled. That's what CIA does to policymaking.*

Is intelligence at fault for creating this unhappiness? Should it alter its ways to court greater popularity? Or is the problem integral and endemic to the intelligence-policy relationship? The answers to these questions may become clearer as we look at some of the concrete ways in which the frictions arise.

Why Policy Resents Intelligence: Five Ways to be Unpopular

Presidents and their senior advisors will be unhappy with intelligence when it is not supportive of their policies. They will feel particularly frustrated when:

1. *Intelligence fails to reduce uncertainty—*

Policymakers operate under a burden of pervasive uncertainty, much of it threatening the viability of their policies. They are forever hopeful that someone will relieve them of some of this uncertainty, and so they look to intelligence for what common sense tells them should be reserved to augury and divination. Forecasting, to be sure, is the life's blood of the intelligence estimator. But there is a world of difference between a forecast (an analytic judgment resting on carefully defined assumptions) and an oracular prophecy (secured by divine inspiration). Unfortunately, much of what is expected of intelligence by policymakers lies in this latter realm.

A good example is the perennial complaint that intelligence failed to predict a coup d'etat—a coercive regime change or palace uprising—but, of course, a coup is typically a conspiratorial act that depends for its success on preservation of absolute secrecy. If intelligence gets wind of such an event, it means that secrecy has been compromised and the coup is almost certain to fail.

Intelligence forecasting is actually done quite respectably by the community, and can be of real value to the thoughtful policy analyst. When it stays within its legitimate bounds of identifying and illuminating alternative outcomes, assigning subjective probabilities to them, and exploring their possible implications for US policy, the decision maker is well served. But he will rarely think so. For such a forecast, rather than narrowing uncertainty, will make him aware of the full range of uncertainty he faces and make his calculations harder rather than easier. Indeed, much intelligence estimation is and must be

* Henry Brandon, *The Retreat of American Power* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973), p. 103.

of this nature. Precisely because it seeks to reflect complex reality, its product often renders the harassed decision maker's life more difficult.

2. *Intelligence restricts their options—*

Every new administration comes into office with a national security agenda of its own, bent upon putting its mark on the nation's foreign policy. It believes that a significant shift in that policy is both desirable and possible. It will encounter a foreign policy bureaucracy (including intelligence) that believes it is neither. Intelligence professionals will greet the administration's new policy initiatives with cogent analyses showing how vigorously allies will oppose these new policies, how resolutely neutrals will pervert them to their own ends, and how effectively adversaries will blunt them. At every step, it will appear to the policy leaders that intelligence fights them, seeks to fence them in, and, indeed, helps them fail.

And the pattern persists. As the policy leadership begins to face unexpected foreign challenges, its quick responses will often be met with more intelligence assessments that seem to be saying "it didn't work" or "it will almost certainly not succeed." The decision makers will conclude that intelligence not only constricts their room for maneuver, but also arms their political opponents. Worst of all, it constantly and annoyingly reminds them of their limited capacity to influence events. No matter how well the interaction may serve the interests of sound policy, there is no question that it builds tension between the two sides.

In these encounters, we should acknowledge that intelligence does not always "know better." There are times when intelligence is unaware that stated objectives are not the *real* objectives of policy, and will leave out of its analysis elements of the picture that may be important to the decision makers. Presidents paint upon a canvas far broader than the particular segments on which intelligence tends to focus. Its assessments, therefore, may be quite valid for those segments, but may miss broader considerations that Presidents care about.

A vivid example is provided by the Carter Administration's proposal to impose sanctions—including a grain embargo—on the USSR, in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The stated objective was to penalize the offender by imposing political and economic costs on him. When intelligence was asked to assess the potential impact of the sanctions package, it responded with a judgment, the thrust of which was that the sanctions package would not be an effective instrument. Absent solid participation by our allies, sanctions would do no serious damage to the Soviet economy nor impair the leadership's objectives in any significant way. Not surprisingly, President Carter gave the assessment a rather frigid reception, but its negative judgments turned out not to be a decisive factor in his calculus. From the President's perspective, the sanctions package was just right. He considered a highly visible response to Afghanistan as imperative, but it had to be low-risk. A military undertaking was ruled out as far too hazardous. Inaction was ruled out, because it would be read in the rest of the world as a signal of US irresolution and condonement. The sanctions, though unsatisfying in terms of direct effects, would convey a strong signal of disapprobation and censure, without engendering worrisome

consequences. It would satisfy the popular need to express the nation's sense of outrage and would portray the President as willing to take the political heat of angering an important domestic constituency—the farmers—for the sake of a foreign issue of principle.

It goes almost without saying that intelligence could not then, and cannot ever, be expected to take such considerations into account.

3. *Intelligence undercuts their policies—*

Administrations have often found intelligence analyses appearing at times and in ways unhelpful to the pursuit of policies on which they had embarked. This can happen in two ways: (1) Through a genuine and protracted divergence of intelligence judgments from publicly stated Administration views of a given situation, and (2) Through fortuity or inadvertence. An example of the first phenomenon was provided by the stubborn independence displayed by the intelligence community in the early phases of the Vietnam escalation in 1964-65, when its national estimates consistently offered up a far more pessimistic assessment of North Vietnamese staying power than was reflected in the Johnson Administration's public assertions. While this divergence between intelligence and policy did not become public knowledge until the appearance of the Pentagon Papers in 1971, the mid-1960s intelligence performance evoked considerable disquiet and chagrin among policy insiders at the time.

The days of such protracted differences of view between intelligence and policy are probably over. In the intelligence-policy environment of the 1980s, it seems highly unlikely that a divergence of assessment could be sustained for very long. Congressional oversight and its intimate access to intelligence analysis would bring any significant disparities quickly to the surface and thus cause them to be resolved.

The other cause, policy-undercutting by fortuity and inadvertence, is more likely to survive, as it is a matter of human frailty. Sometimes it is merely a question of miserable timing—as in the classic case of the intelligence reassessment of North Korean military forces that credited them with substantially greater capabilities than had been previously appreciated. The estimate was fine, but it just happened to "hit the street" within a week of President Carter's announcement of his controversial decision to begin withdrawal of US forces from South Korea. A pure coincidence, but it caused understandable consternation.

At other times it is a matter of inattention—as in the so-called discovery of the Soviet brigade in Cuba which, it turned out later, had been there, in one form or another, all along, but had simply been lost sight of. Issues of this kind, seemingly unimportant, can suddenly escalate into heated public controversy and make life difficult for the policy leaders. However minor the transgression, they will regard intelligence less fondly.

4. *Intelligence provokes public controversy—*

From time to time, routine differences within the community over how to interpret ambiguous intelligence evidence turns into heated, and perhaps even acrimonious debate. When the competing interpretations clearly affect impor-

tant policy issues, the internal controversy can easily spill out into the public arena. In the 1950s and 1960s, when what transpired in the world of intelligence remained largely opaque, such disputes could be easily contained within the Executive Branch. In more recent times, with the progressive "opening up" of intelligence through the Congress and the media, and through its more visible involvement with policy, a disputation within the community is soon drawn into and exploited by the public debate, often in ways that make life more difficult for the national security policymaker.

Examples of policy-relevant debates that have been stimulated or intensified by intelligence controversy come quickly to mind:

— Whether the Tupolev Backfire bomber is an intermediate-range or an intercontinental-capable bomber;

— Whether extensive Soviet civil defense preparations add up to enhanced "survivability" for Soviet society;

— How significantly Western technology contributes to the growth of the Soviet economy and its military power;

— Whether Western calculations of Soviet military spending adequately reflect the real size and burden of Soviet defense;

— To what extent the Soviet natural gas pipeline will aggravate Western Europe's dependence on imported energy.

This brief sampling is probably sufficient to suggest that the issues in dispute often bear on strategic, budgetary, arms control, or economic policy decisions important to an Administration's overall strategy. To the extent that intelligence controversy helps arm the opposition in such disputes, its contribution is not exactly appreciated.

5. *Intelligence fails to persuade—*

Ever since John F. Kennedy's *tour de force* in unveiling photographic intelligence on the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba to a hushed UN audience, successive administrations have sought to emulate that feat. Though the results have been mixed at best, hope springs eternal that a release of intelligence findings or a public display of exotic evidence will enlighten an uninformed or misinformed public, win over a cynical journalist, or convince a skeptical congressman. At one time limited to an occasional State Department White Paper and a private briefing here and there, the intelligence product now finds its way into the public domain through more and more channels and in ever greater volume—most of it, of course, at the instigation and under the aegis of the policy community. It moves through such vehicles as press conferences, media briefings and backgrounders, testimony on the Hill, formal Reports to Congress, and official glossy publications.

In a general way, this sea change in public access to intelligence has undoubtedly had its beneficial impact on public understanding of often complex and murky situations. It is far more questionable, however, whether intelligence can be used effectively as an instrument of public persuasion; whether the marshalling of intelligence evidence on one side or another of a

sharply debated issue ever succeeds in gaining solid converts. In a tactical situation, say, when a heated debate moves toward a crucial vote, a well-focused, lucid intelligence briefing can often sway a wavering agnostic and stiffen an irresolute supporter. But the record suggests that the conversion will not stick, that the gnawing doubts soon return.

Reasons for this phenomenon are not hard to find:

— Time was when public disclosure of intelligence was a rare and notable event that summoned up an aura of mystery and miracle, endowing the product with uncommon authority. That is no more. As disclosure became ever more routine, the gloss wore off, and an inevitable "debasement of the currency" set in.

— Intelligence assessments, when lifted out of their context, fuzzed and diluted ("sanitized") to protect sources and methods, lose much of their authenticity. To the intelligence professional who has built his mosaic from a welter of carefully evaluated raw data, often accumulated over years, the evidence may be totally compelling. To a public audience, coming to the issue cold and exposed only to the sanitized version, the evidence will often seem ambiguous and the judgments inadequately supported.

— Intelligence evidence is brought into public play often in situations of deep controversy, where the contention usually is not over observable facts, but over points of principle. The physical things that intelligence is best at recording are often not much help in settling points of principle. Central America offers a good example: Divergent views of that threat center on the conceptual question of whether the revolutionary situation in El Salvador is fundamentally endogenous, i.e., rooted in and fueled by internal, historic forces, or exogenous, i.e., externally stimulated and sustained. That conceptual issue cannot be resolved by displays of intelligence evidence, however persuasive, that Soviet arms do indeed flow through Nicaraguan ports to the Salvadoran rebels.

— The impact that intelligence can have on public perceptions is further constrained by the understandable tendency of people to reject bad news—what social psychologists used to call "cognitive dissonance." Many of the issues on which intelligence is brought to bear publicly do indeed have unhappy implications. Acceptance of the bad news means having to draw costly, risky, or generally unsettling consequences. A classic example is the case of "Yellow Rain," the discovery of lethal toxins being used under Soviet tutelage in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan. In spite of the overwhelming weight of confirmatory evidence accumulated over eight years, extensively published, briefed and shared worldwide, the findings continue to be challenged and contested, sometimes with offerings of bizarre scientific counter-explanations that defy common sense. The extreme reluctance to accept the evidence at face value cannot be attributed simply to the fact that intelligence can never meet the rigorous laboratory standards for evidence that scientists like to insist upon. The explanation for the

> continued questioning must surely lie in the unpleasantness of the implications, insofar as they seem to raise doubts about the viability of arms control agreements.

In sum, for all the reasons enumerated above, policy leaders are bound to develop a rather ambivalent view of the support they can hope to get from their intelligence community. From what has been said, it should be clear that the resulting "love-hate" relationship is endemic to the situation and that there is not much that intelligence can do, or should do, to alter it. Indeed, a greater effort to "serve policy well" could lead to even greater ambivalence and discord on the part of those we seek to serve. Which takes us back to Sherman Kent's admonition in the leitmotif at the beginning of this paper:

> By striving too hard in this direction, intelligence may come to seem just another policy voice, and an unwanted one at that.

10 Apr. 85

Each pronoun agrees with their antecedent. Just between you and I, case is important. Verbs has to agree with their subjects. Watch out for irregular verbs which has cropped into our language. Don't use no double negatives. A writer mustn't shift your point of view. When dangling, don't use participles. Join clauses good, like a conjunction should. Don't use a run-on sentence you got to punctuate it. About sentence fragments. In letters themes reports articles and stuff like that we use commas to keep a string of items apart. Don't use commas, which aren't necessary. It's important to use apostrophe's right. Don't abbrev. Check to see if you any words out. In my opinion I think that an author when he is writing shouldn't get into the habit of making use of too many unnecessary words that he does not really need. And, of course, there's that old one: Never use a preposition to end a sentence with. Last but not least, lay off cliches.

THE CONSENSUS

The Consensus is a problem to the natural scientists. It has no before. It h no after. It is a coming together not unlike the aardvark, which did not evo from any other animal and is not evolving into any other. It follows that it is easy job to generate a Consensus.

The Consensus also is like the Mandate. It can be compared t Gathering Momentum that has not yet started to move. It has some of attributes of the Aura. But no one of these—the Mandate, the Momentum the Aura—can fairly be said to be like a Consensus.

The Consensus is especially noted for its digestive system. It chews a and has three stomachs, but it eats only soft foods because it lacks a gizzar handle hard facts. The Consensus has little structure and very few bo Generally it is said of a Consensus only that it *appears to be*. Hence whe disintegrates it vanishes quite completely, leaving behind only a fine powde ash, which does not lend itself readily to postmortem (or to psychoana either).